

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KING of Iowa addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCOTT of Georgia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I have a Special Order for tonight I am taking out with Mr. SCOTT and Mr. BISHOP.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the 5-minute for Mr. LEWIS is vacated.

There was no objection.

PROPOSED DELTA/U.S. AIRWAYS MERGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 28 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, joining me tonight are Mr. SCOTT and Mr. BISHOP from Georgia.

Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to tell you about a bad deal, a very bad deal. You may have read about the recent unwanted, unsolicited and unnecessary bid from U.S. Airways to take over a strong, proud, Georgia company named Delta Airlines.

But Americans have learned the hard way that bigger is not always better, and in this case, Delta's takeover by U.S. Airways will have a devastating impact on the people of Atlanta, on the east coast of this country, and it will rob the American travelers of the economic advantages that competition creates.

Mr. Speaker, today I represent thousands of Delta employees all over Georgia, hundreds of Delta pilots, and the executive leadership of that organization. Delta employees and its executive are working through some difficult problems right now as they reshape the company, but when it comes to this merger, they speak with one strong and mighty voice.

Management and employees agree on this. None of them are for this deal. I think that speaks volumes, Madam

Speaker. It demonstrates how deeply they believe this takeover will impair the quality of airline transportation in our country.

You may have heard that Delta had run into some problems and was going through bankruptcy proceedings, but it is about to emerge from this bankruptcy a stronger, better airline, with a renewed commitment to serve the American people, American travelers and world travelers.

Delta had problems but it was not a failing company. They have used the hardship of bankruptcy to make tremendous progress. In spite of its challenges, it has created 70 new international destinations. It offers service to all 50 States. Employee morale has improved. Pensions for 90,000 employees and retirees were saved, and 2,500 pilots, machinists and other employees have been called back to work.

It is because of the sacrifice of Delta employees and executives to make good on its commitments to its creditors that it became a prime target for this hostile merger. It is because Delta was able to win the uphill battle of bankruptcy and is poised to emerge transformed that U.S. Airways want to take it over against its will. That is not right, that is not fair, and that is not just.

This is not a case of the survival of the fittest. U.S. Airways is in trouble. It has already gone through two bankruptcies and cannot seem to bring its merger with America West to a close.

In 2004, U.S. Airways was on death's doorstep. It had no choice but to merge with America West. It would have had to liquidate all its assets if it had not merged with another company, but 2 years later, the integration of U.S. Airways and America West is still not complete. The majority of its labor groups are still working under separate contracts. It still has two IT systems. U.S. Airways has not even repainted all of its aircraft.

Madam Speaker, even though U.S. Airways cannot seem to manage its own merger, it is hoping and praying that it can take advantage of the hard work and tough sacrifices the good people of Delta have already made so that it can survive. This is not a win-win situation. It is a win for U.S. Airways and an incredible risk for Delta Airlines and for all of its customers.

It is a risk for the people of Atlanta, a risk for Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, the largest commercial airport in the world. It is a risk for the State of Georgia and thousands of American citizens.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I want to yield to my colleague and friend from the State of Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank very much my colleague Mr. LEWIS.

This is indeed an extraordinary moment in the history of this country and history of American business. Let us see if we cannot set the stage properly so we understand exactly what is going on.

As my colleague Mr. LEWIS has stated and given history of Delta Airlines' brilliant and hard fought effort to come out of bankruptcy, this is a great American story. It is perhaps one of the greatest business recovery stories in American history.

Delta Airlines was at the bottom, but that company came together. It made the sacrifices. Its pilots' union gave and gave. Its employees gave back raises. They combined their efforts. That company, under brilliant management and leadership, brought itself together.

We owe it to Delta to have their bankruptcy plan now go into effect, and they have a plan to come out of bankruptcy, which they will have and they will come out of bankruptcy within the next 6 months. Do we not owe it to Delta to give them that opportunity to make it work?

Meanwhile, lurching on the sidelines, almost like a vulture, is U.S. Airways. Let me take a moment to describe U.S. Airways at this point. Here is a company that is just coming out of bankruptcy itself, a company that has just gone through a merger, that is now problematic, a company that has a merger in which it is now dealing with two sets of pilots' unions, two sets of flight attendants' unions, two reservation systems and two scheduling systems. How in the world can we, in effect, for a creditor who has an indebtedness with Delta feel that that investment can best be met by investing in a company, an airline company that is beset with a ton of labor problems?

I want to deal with the other issue. Not only is it bad for the creditors, it is bad in terms of our own antitrust practices. In a previous case in which there was a United Airlines merger, the Justice Department's antitrust division ruled that that could not merge, and they did not nearly have the overlapping that this does.

So now we have a case here that with Delta in bankruptcy, even if this merger does proceed to a point, then it goes into bankruptcy, then the antitrust division of the Justice Department must rule.

That is why it is important for us in Congress to make this bold statement and urge the Justice Department and urge that we have hearings and do everything we can to stop this merger from going through on the grounds that it is anti-competitiveness, it is anti-consumer and it is anti-American for this important reason.

Another thing about U.S. Airways, they buy their airplanes from foreign governments, whereas Delta buys theirs from American governments.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. SCOTT should know we have two more BISHOPS waiting to speak. We have BISHOP of Georgia and BISHOP of Utah, and they both live in cities that are served by Delta. BISHOP of Georgia from Albany, Georgia, and BISHOP of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Madam Speaker, I now yield to Mr. BISHOP, my colleague from Georgia.